

LEAD TESTING SCHOOL WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM - FUNDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SUMMARY

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES

LEAD TESTING SCHOOL WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM – FUNDING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SUMMARY

DPHHS is working with DEQ, OPI, and other partners to ensure that schools have the resources, education, technical assistance, and funding to meet any new requirements. DPHHS will assist schools of all sizes as they work toward compliance.

Testing will help determine the number of schools affected by high lead levels

Sampling results under the proposed DPHHS rules will enable schools and DEQ to identify sources of lead that need to be remediated or where a flushing program may be able to decrease lead levels without additional expense.

Remediation costs cannot be fully known until sampling is completed. Data is needed to have an accurate picture of lead in school drinking water statewide. ***Based on studies done in Michigan, DEQ estimates that one-third of all schools will have water fixtures that test high in lead.***

DEQ has secured resources to cover sampling for lead in schools

821 accredited schools in Montana will benefit from the \$273,000 DEQ has secured the EPA and State funds. ***These funds will pay for roughly 11,000 initial, individual samples.*** The cost of water testing is equivalent to \$25 per sample collected, assuming the facility owner/operator takes the sample. Sampling is as simple as filling a water bottle from a drinking water fixture after the water has been sitting undisturbed in the system for at least 6 hours (like overnight) and mailing it to a lab.

Schools will receive training and technical assistance

Training and technical assistance will also be provided before the rules take effect and are fully enforced.

- DEQ has created guidance on how to conduct sampling, along with technical assistance and training to assist schools every step in the process.
- DEQ will provide a template schools can use to outline their water supply system. The schematic will help schools determine the location of any high lead source within the system.
- ***DEQ will have a full-time staff person, who is an expert on lead in drinking water, working with schools to help them implement the rules.***

Remediation can be simple and inexpensive

- A flushing program for sources of water with between 5 PPB and 15 PPB is a low-to-no cost option that would allow schools to phase the replacement of fixtures.
- DEQ staff will work with schools to help them identify their lowest cost options for remediation.
- It is estimated that only 1/3 of those fixtures will need to be replaced with lead-free fixtures. Some schools could have fewer fixtures that need to be replaced. Fixture cost estimates for lead-free commercial grade ADA compliant fixtures, including, installation costs, are:
 - Drinking fountain - \$800 for a standard unit with water cooling capabilities.
 - Bath or kitchen faucet - \$300 per faucet.

DEQ will assist with the identification of sources of funding to pay for remediation

- The **State Revolving Funding**, through DEQ and DNRC, can be used to help with some aspects of remediation including lead-service line replacements. Lead-service line replacement is one of the most expensive potential remediation costs.
- In 2017, SB 307 created the new **School Major Maintenance Aid Account** as a mechanism for schools to fund facility projects with a combination of state and local effort (20-9-525, MCA). In 2019, SB 92 strengthened the purposes of the funding to include “planning for improvements to and maintenance of school and student safety.” This funding source could be used to remediate sources of lead in drinking water.
- **USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program** funding is a source of funding and assistance for schools in rural areas.
- The Department of Commerce’s **Direct Local Assistance** funding for schools in HB 625 provides \$10.5 million for infrastructure for schools in communities impacted by natural resources.
- DEQ will assist in funding short-term sources of water, if necessary.
- Other sources of funding include, but are not limited to:
 - Water Infrastructure Improvement for the Nation Act (WIIN) federal funding
 - EPA discretionary sources

DEQ and DPHHS will provide assistance to the reservations, if requested.

The state does not have the authority to implement rules/laws on the Indian Reservations. The schools located on the reservations will be notified of the Lead in School Rules and can choose to participate. The WIIN grant has set aside 6.44% of the \$44 million funding to assist tribal education agencies.